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ATTENDANCE ON PUBLIC WORSHIP.

THERE are many points of difference between the meeting-house and the theatre. The one is the house of God, the other the house of the devil; the one is associated with holiness to the Lord, the other frequently displays a little *fashionable* vice, such as seduction, and cursing, and swearing; the one is calculated to advance the interests of religion in the community, the other possesses an unalterable tendency to public demoralization. Yet there is an analogy in the case, which, for the credit of professing Christians, we could wish to see done away. No man in his senses considers himself to be under an *obligation* to attend the theatre. Such attendance does not rank among his personal or relative duties. It is commonly regarded as a matter of taste, to be determined by the views or wishes of individuals, while statute authority is not suffered to influence the decision. Now is it not a melancholy fact, that the practice of many who bear the Christian name, evinces that they have taken no higher view of attendance on the house of God? They recognize no obligation to assemble together on the first day of the week—they maintain no subjection to this department of the laws of Christ's kingdom—they give to the winds the authority which enjoins the holy observance of the Christian Sabbath. We do not level this severe accusation against a few solitary examples; it is, to a painful extent, applicable throughout the churches. There are thousands of church members who give evidence that would satisfy any honest and enlightened jury, that the spirit of disobedience to God reigns in their hearts, and that they are still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. We have made a grave charge, and we will substantiate it by the following proof.

I. The very idea of *Christian* implies subjection to the laws of Christ. Even when the Mosaic economy was in full force, God declared obedience to be better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. Thus the highest authority in the universe has recognized the necessity and excellence of submission to the divine commandment. To pretend, therefore, to be his servants, while a spirit of rebellion against him reigns in the heart, and is cherished in the life, is to insult our Creator and ruin our own souls. Nor will any amount of bodily labour, or showy religious profession, form a substitute for the entire devotedness of the heart. This God demands, and any thing short of this, the perfection of his nature and the laws of his kingdom render it impossible for him to accept. A partial allegiance, a divided heart, or, in Hebrew phrase, a heart and a heart, our Sovereign will not—cannot receive. But this is not all. For those who profess Christianity, in that very profession publicly acknowledge their obligation to obey Christ with heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. All this is embraced in their profession, and it is included in the very name by which they are called. Is it to be borne, then, that men will pertinaciously arrogate to themselves the designation of Christians, while the word of Christ has no charms for them, and his commands exert no binding force upon their consciences? A Christian uninfluenced by the Spirit of obedience to Christ, is a contradiction in terms; and yet how many instances of this practical absurdity do we find in the visible church! Well may the Saviour propose to multitudes the challenge, “Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” We are all Christians, forsooth! That point is settled. But if we are characterized by insubordination to our Divine Master, we are no more Christians in reality than the swarthy son of Africa is a European. We call ourselves Christians, but if the principle of obedience to Messiah does not rule in our hearts, we are on the broad road to destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. Our name implies the duty of subjection to Christ; our steadfast adherence to that name testifies the distinct recognition of our Christian obligations.

II. The neglect of a known and acknowledged duty, such as attendance on public worship, proves that the law of Him whom we profess to serve has no hold on the conscience. Better not to have known the way of truth, than, after it is known, to turn from the holy commandment. Where the means of information are possessed, ignorance will not excuse

the violation of God's statutes. The Scriptures speak of *sin* committed in ignorance. But fearful are the aggravations of guilt when it is contracted in the face of positive engagements, of the most solemn character, to faithfulness in God's covenant. An engagement between man and man is binding,—shall the engagements which men come under to God be utterly disregarded? In human affairs the violation of an engagement is followed by punishment: can we suppose it to be otherwise in those things that are divine? The supposition were as foolish as it is unfounded. We may choose to forget or disregard our covenant engagements, but they are had in remembrance before God, and he will visit us for our offences. Let these principles be put to the test, in regard to the public religious observances of the Christian Sabbath. We thankfully admit that there are considerable numbers in our congregations, who, by their continued regularity of attendance upon public worship, afford good evidence of attachment to the house of God, and subjection to the authority of the Redeemer. On the first day of the week their place is not empty; and we trust that in them is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel. What is the case, however, with regard to a large proportion of professing Christians? They come occasionally to public worship; that is, as often as they find it perfectly convenient, and no cause, arising from the allurements of pleasure or the fascinations of worldly gain, demands their presence elsewhere. They come to the house of God, when there is nothing better to engage their attention. This declaration may be considered harsh; but is it not true, that the slightest pretext is made an excuse for devoting the day to other purposes than those which God contemplated when he blessed and hallowed it? A friend is with *them*, or *they* are with a friend; the weather is too wet or too dry—too hot, or too cold; the place of meeting is too near, or too far; the minister is too dull, or too animated; the music is too old, or too new; the house of worship is too unfashionable, or too gay, though, we confess, this latter objection rarely influences these ninety-nine-per-cent-for-the-world, and one-per-cent-for-heaven Christians. Now will it not be admitted on all hands, that where there is love to the Sabbath as a divine institution, and a desire to bow to the authority of its Lord, some effort, at least, will be made to obey the command, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together"? We see how successfully men can overcome difficulties, when their heart is in the work which they are labouring to accomplish. Every day witnesses the triumphs of human ingenuity

and power, when they are under the direction of a spirit of affectionate zeal and devotedness. Why is it then that so many stumble at the straws which are in the way to our public religious assemblies? If the place of meeting is too cold, are there not means of heating it; and is it to be supposed that Christian liberality, interested in the advancement of the Redeemer's cause, will withhold such means? Other obstacles will yield to the touch of honest exertion. If a tithe of the anxiety which brings men, women, and children to our fairs and markets, existed in reference to the public services of the sanctuary, instead of being overwhelmed with apologies—intolerably frivolous apologies—for absence from public worship, we should run more risk of being overwhelmed by multitudes of people crowding to attend public worship. But the heart is not with God: the spirit of obedience to the commands of Christ is not felt. This is the true account of the apathy which so many exhibit. Let men excuse it as they may, its true cause is a hollow, heartless, hopeless profession of Christianity.

III. The disadvantages of partial attendance on public worship are great and numerous. The occasional hearer of the Gospel is generally the best and most loyal servant of Satan. Occasional hearing is one of the most efficient instrumentality of extending the kingdom of darkness upon the earth. By means of occasional hearing, all interest in religion evaporates; and, instead of growing, there is visible declension in knowledge and piety. Were the arts and sciences treated as the Gospel is treated by its occasional hearers, the arts and sciences would become objects of thorough disgust: the world would not witness another improvement in them till the last trumpet. Yet men expect, we suppose, to make progress in religion in a way which stands condemned in the judgment of the wise and good since the beginning of time.

Nearly allied to the practice of occasional hearing, is that of running after all the preachers in the place where we happen to reside. This practice, every parent, and all guardians of youth, should stamp with double condemnation. It converts the house of God into a theatre. It is one of the thousand ways of finding our own pleasure on God's holy day, while we labour under the self-deception of fancying that we are doing him service. This evil is extensively prevalent. Every town is infested with these *strolling Christians*, who, like Satan, go to and fro in the earth, and walk up and down in it. They find no resting-place for the soles of their feet. Some of them

are sheer enthusiasts; others come to the ark, simply because the flood of waters is upon the earth; the Sabbath separates between them and their own dear world.

We had intended to enter more at length into the consideration of this important subject, and also to state some of the *advantages* connected with the regular observance of God's public ordinances; we find, however, that the additional observations which we meant to offer must be reserved for another paper.

D.

HINDERANCES OF THE CHRISTIAN WALK.

RALPH ERSKINE.

Darkness hinders walking. A man that wants light cannot walk comfortably: even so, the darkness of ignorance hinders this Christian walk; *they that walk in the night stumble*. Oh pray that God may take away your gross darkness. It is midnight with many, in respect of black and dark ignorance; and, therefore, no wonder they should stumble and fall,—some into one open wickedness, and some into another.

Heedlessness hinders walking. When a man doth not take heed to the way, but is gazing about him, he is ready either to dash his foot against a stone, and so fall and break his bones; or else he is ready to wander out of the way, while he doth not notice the road. Even so, spiritual heedlessness and unwatchfulness is the cause of many wandering steps out of God's way; *Watch therefore and pray*, saith Christ, *that ye enter not into temptation*.

Weakness hinders walking. If a man be sick and weakly, he is hardly able to walk abroad. As there is a bodily weakness, so there is a soul weakness. As all by nature are without strength, even so, those that are strengthened by grace may turn weak and powerless; while corruption is strong, grace is weak, faith is weak. Seek to have this impediment removed, by being strong in the Lord, saying, *I will go in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, even of his only*.

Fetters hinder walking. If you bind a man he will walk at leisure. Many are bound with the strongest fetters: even believers may be under the influence of some secret lusts, and these are so binding that they are like fetters: they have the binding power of a law; and hence they are called *the law of*

the members, warring against the law of the mind. And again, I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. Seek, therefore, that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus may make you free from the law of sin and death. Seek to be free of your fetters, to be loosed of your bands: Surely I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bonds.

Weights hinder walking. If a man hath a clog at his heels, a heavy weight on his back, he will not walk hard. There is a two-fold weight that hinders the Christian walk much. The weight of *worldly incumbrances; the cares of the world* are a dead weight that keep many from walking. O Sirs, cast off that weight. There is also the weight of *predominant sin*. Whatever be the weight, we are to lay it aside, that we may be in case to walk, yea, and to run in God's way. *Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us; and run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and finisher of our faith.*

Diversions hinder walking. There is some company if a man meet with in his way, they will mightily hinder and retard him in his journey: so it is with the carnal company of the men of this world. They will not walk fast in God's way, but make many a stop, who haunt the company of graceless and profane persons, that mock at religion, idle away their time, and neglect their souls.

Discord hinders walking. If men fall out by the way; if, instead of walking together with concord, they fall by the ears, this will hinder and mar their walking; yea, perhaps they may disable one another, that they can walk no more, but must lie by the way. So here, discord and contention hinder the spiritual walking. They that live in the fire of strife, have little of the life of religion. They that are fighting in the way are not walking in it. They that are occupied in slandering, back-biting, reproaching their neighbours, and especially that fall out with the godly, and cannot live at peace with them, or in love to them, their walking is marred. Therefore, beware of discord. Where there is much division there is little devotion.

Doubting and Discouragement hinder walking. If a man doubt about the road wherein he walketh; if he doubt that it is not the way that will carry him to the place he hath in view, then he is discouraged and hath little heart to walk therein. Even so, doubting instead of believing, mars the spiritual walk, and fills the soul with discouragement. David reasons himself out of this discouragement, saying, *Why art*

thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God. Many reason themselves out of their faith instead of reasoning themselves into faith. Doubting is no duty; nay, it is a sin that hinders our walk. Discouragement is no duty; no, no: *The joy of the Lord shall be your strength.*

Intemperance hinders walking. If a man intoxicate himself with drink, or overcharge his belly with meat, he is more fit for loitering and snorting in a bed, than walking on the road. Intemperance is such a hinderance to all spiritual walking, that if a man be stuffed with meat, and drink, and immoderate cares, he is altogether unfit for spiritual work and worship. Therefore Christ warns his disciples, even them, to beware of it: *Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you unawares. Watch, therefore, and pray always.*

Slothfulness and Laziness hinder walking. When people shut themselves up in a close chamber to sleep, surely their walking is hindered. Even so, nothing hinders the Christian walk more than spiritual sloth and security. I will tell you two chambers wherein especially the lazy and secure sinner shuts him up to sleep: the chamber of lies and the chamber of ease. The chamber of *lies*. *They have made lies their refuge.* Whether it be the lying refuge of their legal righteousness, their Pharisaic profession, their false hope, their partial repentance, their carnal dreams and delusions, if they sleep on there, God's curse will pull them out. The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies. Some are brought out in mercy, but the most part are dragged out in wrath. The chamber of *ease*. Moab hath been at ease from his youth, never truly awakened, never duly concerned about their soul, nor concerned about the affairs of Christ's house. *Woe to them that are at ease in Zion.* That partial security may overtake believers themselves, is evident, not only from common experience, but from the parable of the virgins; where it is said, both of the wise and foolish, that, *While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.* Slothfulness and walking are inconsistent; seek, therefore, that God would deliver you from sloth and security.

These are some of the hinderances of the Christian walk; seek to be free from them, and beware of them, if you would walk in Christ.

A RESOLUTION.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to walk by faith, and not by sight, on earth, so that I may live by sight, and not by faith, in heaven.

THE reason why I am so much taken with the garnish and seeming beauty of this world's vanities, so as to step out of the road of holiness to catch at, or delight myself in them, is only because I look upon them with an eye of sense. For could I behold every thing with the eye of faith, I should judge of them, not as they seem to me, but as they are in themselves, *vanity and vexation of the spirit*. For faith has a quick and piercing eye that can look through the outward superficies, into the inward essence of things. It can look through the pleasing bait to the hidden hook, view the sting as well as the honey, the everlasting punishment as well as the temporal contentment there is in sin. It is, as the apostle very well defines it, *the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1. It is the *substance* of whatsoever is promised by God to me, or expected by me from him; so that by faith, whatsoever I hope for in heaven, I may have the substance of upon earth, and it is *the evidence of things not seen*, the presence of what is absent, the clear demonstration of what would otherwise seem impossible; so that I can clearly discern, as through a prospective, hidden things and things afar off, as if they were open, and just at hand. I can look into the deepest mysteries as fully revealed, and see heaven and eternity just ready to receive me.

And oh! could I but always look through this glass, and be constantly upon the mount, taking a view of the land of Canaan, what dreams and shadows would all things here below appear to be! Well; by the grace of God I am resolved no longer to tie myself to sense and sight, the sordid and trifling affairs of this life, but always to walk as one of the other world; to behave myself in all places and at all times, as one already possessed of my inheritance, and an inhabitant of the New Jerusalem; by faith assuring myself I have but a few more days to live below, a little more work to do, and then I shall lay aside my glass, and be admitted to a nearer vision and fruition of God, and *see him face to face*.

By this means, I shall always live, as if I was daily to die; always speak, as if my tongue the next moment were to cleave

to the roof of my mouth ; and continually order my thoughts and affections in such a manner as if my soul were just ready to depart, and take its flight into the other world. By this means, whatsoever place I am in, or whatsoever work I am about, I shall still be with my God, and demean myself so, as if with St. Jerome, I heard the voice of the trumpet crying out, *Awake, ye dead, and come to judgment.*

And thus, though I am at present here in the flesh, yet I shall look upon myself as more really an inhabitant of heaven, than I am upon earth. Here I am but as a pilgrim or sojourner, that has no abiding city ; but there I have a sure and everlasting inheritance, which Christ has purchased and prepared for me, and which faith has given me the possession of. And therefore, as it is my duty, so will I constantly make it my endeavour to live up to the character of a true Christian, whose portion and conversation is in heaven, and think it a disgrace and disparagement to my profession, to stoop to, or entangle myself with such toys and trifles, as the men of the world busy themselves about ; or to feed upon husks with wine here below, when it is in my power, by faith, to be continually supplied with spiritual manna from heaven, till at last I am admitted to it.—*Bishop Beveridge.*

THE DISGUISES OF SIN.

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper ; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”—PROV. xxviii. 13.

No sooner had Adam and Eve eaten the forbidden fruit, than they betrayed the deceitfulness of sin, in their attempt to conceal it. Alluding to this fatal act, Job has this language, “If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom.” Behold the trembling culprits as they stand before their Maker. Adam accuses Eve ; Eve accuses the serpent : nor was this all ; Adam insinuates that God was an accessory to his fall. “Hast thou eaten of the tree,” said God, “whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat ?” Mark the shifting evasion of the first transgressor. “And the man said, the woman *thou* gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” “I did eat ;”—and why did you do so ? Did you not know that the penalty was death ? “*She* gave me ;”—but was she your God ? “The woman *thou* gavest to be with me, she gave me ;”—and must

God be the author, or the accessary, of your transgression and your misery, because he gave you in your solitude a companion to be a help meet for you?

The vain and unhappy art practised by our first parents has been too faithfully, and with dreadful ingenuity, practised by their descendants ever since. It is melancholy to observe how early the attempt to cover sin is manifested by children. "They go astray from the womb," says the Scripture, "speaking lies." Mark the child as it begins to display the capacity of discerning between good and evil. You detect something criminal which it has done. How ready is it to assert its innocence, though the confused countenance and faltering tongue give contradiction to the lie.

What arts do thousands every day employ to screen their wickedness from public knowledge and from public censure. Instead of going straight forward in the highway of innocence and integrity, they have recourse to a thousand expedients to obtain, if possible, the praise of the world, while they indulge themselves in practices which, were they developed in their full enormity, they know would draw on them the indignation of mankind. There are few so lost to some sense of shame and of reproach as to be prepared to set the opinion of their fellow-men altogether at defiance. To screen themselves from odium, we witness men making the most daring denial of charges, to which their own consciences must plead guilty, and the most presumptuous pretensions to virtues to which they must be refused any just claim. We find them falling back on their past services, and pleading a previous reputation to mitigate the keenness of reproach, or bustling eagerly in public movements, that they may recruit their waning popularity. Such arts, however, are sooner or later seen through. The child puts its little concealment behind its back, imagining that no eye sees it because it is hidden from its own: the silly ostrich hides its head in a bush, supposing itself covered, though the whole body is exposed: the defects of a man's character are, in like manner, often well known to the world, even where the greatest pains have been taken to disguise them; and the arts of imposition eventually deceive none but the impostor himself.

It is fearful to reflect to what an extent one species of wickedness or another has its apologists. It is bad, surely, that men should assert their innocence of misdeeds which they secretly persist to practise; but to deny the sinfulness of sin is monstrous. There are none, indeed, except the purely infidel

and profane, who would venture to stand forward as the wholesale advocates of irreligion or immorality; but there are multitudes who would feel shocked by any denial of man's accountability in general terms,—by any assertion of the innocence of human wickedness in the gross,—who are yet found to justify it in some one or other of its details. No man is all evil. Human wickedness appears in ten thousand shapes and modifications; individuals have their prevailing biases and favourite vices; and while one man is ready to see and censure the criminality of his neighbour's actions, his eyes are blind to the perception of his own. The avaricious man will condemn drunkenness and whoredom, and yet he will justify his avarice by the plea of worldly prudence; on the other hand the intemperate and the unchaste, while they pour out their invectives against the dishonesty and oppressions of the avaricious, are not slow to utter their impious sophistries in favour of their own darling abominations. The opinion of the world is a most unsafe guide in matters of morality. While one vice or folly is reprobated, another is fashionable; and while men pretend to reverence virtue and piety, they will overwhelm with reproach and ridicule those who endeavour to carry out virtue and piety in their highest degree and fullest extent. Let us reflect for a moment on the maxims which are current in the world, and by which multitudes regulate their opinions and conduct. Does the word of God say, "Be not conformed to this world"? A thousand tongues vociferate "We cannot be odd; we must do as others do; better be out of the world than out of the fashion." How frequently do we hear dissipation pleaded for on the ground of youth and fortune; luxury justified by the plea that money is put into circulation; the entertainments of a licentious stage contended for on the principle of amusement; and the disgusting brutalities of the race-course, the cock-pit, and the boxing ring, defended on the pretext that the people must have amusements suited to their taste, and tending to give intrepidity to the national character. Even the house of infamy, which is the way to hell, is not without its apologists. But is it safe or right to advocate, in any instance, or in any degree, any evil thing? "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Woe unto them who justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him. He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord." To a mind impressed

with a sense of God and of judgment to come, it must be dreadful to witness the vast multitudes who live in open wickedness—who fear no God—who dread no hell—who make a mock of sin—who laugh at religion—who glory in their shame—who are enemies of the cross of Christ—whose end is destruction.

There are others, again, who would shrink from the direct justification of any flagrant wickedness, and yet endeavour to palliate and excuse their darling propensities and favourite vices. Bring home to them the evil they have done, they will perhaps own that they were wrong; but they immediately muster up a variety of circumstances to diminish their criminality, and to engage your indulgence. That they have done the act they admit, but in what softening terms do they speak either of the evil of the action, or of their concern in it. They would have us believe that it scarcely had their consent—that it was hardly voluntary—that their conduct was passive and unintentional, scarcely reaching the point of moral responsibility. Something, they know not how, came into their minds, and unfortunately misled them. All the while they assure you, that their motives were pure, and their intentions the very best; and laying their hand on their breast, they exclaim, in a tone of moral boastfulness, “Our heads may err, but our hearts are good!” Hearts good! Are they, indeed? What! your heart good with all this pride and self-satisfaction? Good, with all these excuses to cover their corruption, and keep you at ease in your sins? Good, notwithstanding the absence of humility and all evidence of a penitent spirit? Good, while you plead the weakness of your nature, the strength of temptation, and the solicitations and the examples of others, as excuses; when these excuses, instead of lessening your sinfulness, exhibit its hideous and alarming greatness, as they demonstrate the hardness of your heart, the blindness of your conscience, your entire impenitence, the reign of sin within you, and clearly show that you have no mind—no disposition to relinquish your sins?

When men find that their sins are so well known, that they cannot deny them with any hope of obtaining credit, it is common to excuse themselves by endeavouring to lay the blame on others. When Aaron, in the absence of Moses on the mount, was guilty of framing the golden calf, in compliance with the wants and wishes of the idolatrous people, what was the defence which he set up? Instead of making an ingenuous confession, he discovers the same mean spirit of sinful concealment, which he had before exhibited of sinful compliance. He shuffles off

the blame from himself, partly on the people, and partly on accident. "And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that *thou* hast brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my Lord wax hot: thou knowest the people that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods which shall go before us: for, as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and *there came out* this calf." Oh! what innocence does Aaron here assume to himself; he puts on the simplest face imaginable; he wipes his mouth as if he had committed no fault; he would have it thought that it would have been at the risk of his life to have withstood the madness of the people. What did he do with the gold he directed the people to give him. "I cast it into the fire." What then? "And there came out this calf." He leaves us to suppose that this was the result of pure accident or miracle. There was no intention on his part. He did nothing in the matter. Not he, good innocent man. He cast the gold into the fire: did he mean that it should perish there—that it was to disappear and vanish, like a phantom, to the world of visions? For, lo! without act or design on his part, without casting the metal into a mould, or lifting up a tool upon it, the golden calf, as if by supernatural agency, stands out before the camp of Israel in all its attitude of idolatrous temptation! When we are induced at any time to plead the temptations of others as an excuse for ourselves, let us remember, that, though men tempt one another to the commission of transgression, the guilt is not thereby divided out among them, reducing the amount to each; but that by becoming partakers in other men's sins, not only is the number of sins thereby multiplied, but the amount of guilt is aggravated to each, inasmuch as we render ourselves accessaries to the perdition of each other.

It is not merely by accusing others that men endeavour to remove from the minds of others, and from their own consciences, a sense of the criminality of their actions, but they impiously represent God as a partaker in their sins. They will not dare, indeed, to say in bold positive terms, that God is the direct author of their sins; but this is a fair construction of their representations and reasonings. "God, say they, has implanted certain appetites and passions within us; and when we err through the indulgence of these, he will not be rigid

in bringing us to a strict account. He does not require impossibilities; He does not expect perfection; He is merciful and will cast the veil of pity over the inevitable infirmities of poor human nature. Besides, if he has not decreed our salvation, and if he do not give us his grace, how can we be better than we are?" Now, who does not at once see, that such a representation as this is an apology which sinners often make for themselves, at the expense of the moral character of the sinless Jehovah? If man have sinful propensities, who made him so? God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions. Does God indeed require less than perfect obedience from his creatures? Remember that the divine law is immutable, and that as it is holy, just, and good, to require less than perfect obedience would be at once incompatible with the moral character of God, and with the happiness of his creatures. To represent God as throwing a veil of pity over the sins of men, is to make him connive at transgression, and represent our apostacy and wickedness, not as criminal, but unfortunate—as the proper object of pity, instead of punishment. God no doubt is infinitely merciful, but his mercy is not weakness; it must harmonize with his rectitude and holiness; and we may be sure that he who spared not his own Son, when he gave him to be the propitiation for our sins, will not spare us if we cling by our sins, refusing to be reconciled to God. As we should dread to wrest the doctrines of grace to our own destruction, we must beware of putting any such construction on his decrees, or on the necessity and omnipotence of the Spirit's agency, as would afford us any cloak for our sins. No view of any Scripture doctrine can be correct, which would lessen our convictions of the damning nature of sin, or that God will treat it with the slightest indulgence. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death."

The Scriptures ascribe an agency to the devil in influencing the sins of mankind. He worketh in the children of disobedience; he leads them captive at his will; they do the works of their Father the devil. Such are the declarations of Scripture. But whatever may be the nature and extent of the agency of the devil and his angels in instigating mortals to the commission of transgression, that awful fact, for fact it is, affords

them no cloak for their sin, in as much as it does not deprive them of will or of moral responsibility. The devil cannot force us to sin. He presents his temptations to our minds with such art as is most likely to gain his malignant purpose; he may influence, deceive, ensnare, but he cannot coerce. When he succeeds, it is by gaining our own consent. Subtle are his wiles, but they succeed only in consequence of acting upon our inward corruptions. It is because the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, that the devil has any power to prevail against us. When the wicked man attempts to cover himself, by bringing his indictment against the devil, let him consider that his own evil heart is itself a living fountain of all manner of abomination. When the lusts of men and the habits of vice, says Tillotson, are grown strong and confirmed, he may spare his temptations in a great measure; for after wicked men are *wound up* to such a pitch of impiety, they will *go a great while of themselves*.

Another way by which men attempt to keep themselves in some countenance, is by making a set off of their good qualities against their defects. They are not, it is said, as they ought to be, but then think of their excellences. They have done wrong; but, then, who is perfect, and consider how many bright spots adorn their character! Such a man is a loose liver, but then it is pleaded how generous he is, how public-spirited, how much he befriends the poor man! Look at that man there; he is hard and penurious; you cannot get a sixpence out of him to save a famishing brother, but after many a pull and fetch; but oh! he can go over all the points of doctrine as glibly as a sailor can box the points of the compass; and then what a disciplinarian he is,—I mean if you keep him away from his own house,—if you will look at the mint, anise, and cummin, and not at the weightier matters of the law,—and if you will allow him to bind *all* his burthens on other men's shoulders.—When a man is allowed to plead a set off of his virtues against his vices, and especially where he has the whole calculation his own way, he will not fail to strike a large balance in his own favour. We are all exceedingly partial judges in our own cause.

“Where self the wavering balance holds,
’Tis rarely right adjusted.”

God is our judge; and however much we may impose on ourselves, we cannot deceive him by our wretched shifts and miserable reasonings. How many are there that contrive to wrap

their souls up in these detestable falsehoods, even on the bed of death. I have wronged no man; I die in no man's debt; I have no ill will to any human being. Such are the lying shifts by which many a dark soul endeavours to bolster up its hopes in a dying hour.

Not less absurd and pernicious, but no less common, is another method by which men cover their sins,—drawing a comparison between themselves and others. “God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.” What of all this? Because you are not as wicked as this or the other man, are you therefore right with God.

How common is it to cloak the worst passions and the vilest deeds, under the fairest names, and under pretences of the most splendid virtues. When a man is determined on a wickedness, he is never at a loss for a wardrobe of fine names and fair speeches, to cover the native hideousness of the monster. Thanks to the ingenuity of former generations, these are all left ready made. Avarice is called prudence,—providing for ourselves and families; extravagance is called generosity; pride is called honour and spirit; religious indifference is called liberality; bigotry and persecution are called zeal; corrupt propensities are called frailties; and sins of all kinds are called by the softening names of errors, mistakes, imperfections, and indiscretions. Let us remember, however, that good names and fair speeches, do not alter the nature of things, and though they may hide the deformity of sin from our moral perceptions, they only exhibit its exceeding evil to God and to all good beings.

Let us hear some of those excuses which are commonly offered for prevailing sins. What says the *drinker*? I may be occasionally overtaken, but I am no sot. I drink only for the sake of company, but I never drink alone. I may enjoy myself a little after dinner, but I scorn to be seen drinking in the morning. If I do exceed a little occasionally, I am exposed to company, and I do no harm to any body but myself. What says the *swearer*? I never swear unless when I am in a passion. I never swear to any thing that is not true. Hear the *Sabbath-breaker*. He will tell you it is a day of rest, and is not to be spent in sourness, melancholy, and gloom. True: but is this any reason for not employing the Sabbath aright? Hear the man who *neglects the house of God*. He may read good books and sermons, and pray at home, he says: does this free him from his public duties? Hear the *despi-*

sers of religion. They tell you that there are many hypocrites: many, they assure you, are made no better by their religion than their neighbours. They will tell you of this man, and of the other man, who has cheated somebody, though he is a great professor: and they conclude with a may-be that they are as good, and will have as good a chance at the last, as thousands who are continually talking and arguing religion, but show little of its fruits.—Such are the absurd excuses which sinners offers for themselves, and yet these are the men who presume to talk of reason,—who dare to ridicule religion,—who attempt to raise the world's dread laugh at its followers,—and who mercilessly lash with their satire and their sarcasm, religious men, because of the inconsistencies and hypocrisies of professors, though these hypocrisies and inconsistencies are not caused by religion, but by the absence of religion.

To quiet conscience, whilst indulging in sin, what numbers pervert religion, impiously making religion itself a cover for their wickedness. There is a sad tendency in our apostate nature not only to attempt to propitiate Deity by some offering of our own, but to satisfy our own consciences by substituting the outward forms of religion for inward godliness and practical morality. Instead of immediate and complete repentance—instead of thorough reformation—entire relinquishment of all sin and honest endeavour after complete obedience—it is to be feared that numbers have recourse to religious observances as a compromise between their conscience and their crimes. Conscience impels them one way, their love of sin another: now such a religion as shall not interrupt their indulgences, but yet quiet their apprehensions—such a religion as shall flatter them with peace in their sins—is the religion for them. Hence the systems of false religion, or corruptions of the true, which have prevailed in all ages and countries. The Hindoo devotee bathes himself in the Ganges. He imagines all pollution washed from his spirit; but he thus refreshes himself for new abominations. Our Roman Catholic neighbour performs his penances and his pilgrimages—he performs his stations, fasts, and prayers—he betakes himself to Strule or to Lough Derg: all this is prescribed by his confessor as a penalty for his sins. Does this accomplish any spiritual change—any moral reformation? We find him returning from his confessions and his penances, to practise over again his old offences.

“Even in penance planning sins anew.”

called, with the idea that he is wiping out the old score of his transgressions to begin a fresh one. Many an old debauchee, when he finds that he ought to straighten matters for the other world, sets about allaying his misgivings and his fears by placing himself under some popular orthodox preacher. Should a man, however, by any religious expedient whatever,—by sermons or sacraments—by prayers, or fasts, or alms; even though he should give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned,—imagine that he had thereby any title to say, I shall have peace, though I indulge myself in my favourite sin, that man's religion is a cover for his iniquity, and is an abomination to the Lord.

Should a man abuse the doctrine of free justification by faith, as a cover for his evil deeds—should he make the Redeemer's righteousness a fine robe to cover a filthy back—should he continue in sin that grace may abound,—what words can express the atrocity of his impiety in the sight of God? "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?" said God to Israel of old. He blames them not on account of their sacrifices, but for putting these in the place of repentance and obedience. "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings; cease to do evil; learn to do well: seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow."

What shocking impieties, too, and horrid crimes, have not been perpetrated in the name of religion! The Redeemer of the world was persecuted from his very infancy under religious pretences. "Search diligently for the young child," said Herod to the wise men, "and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also." Come and *worship* him, that was his pious pretence; but come and *murder* him was his diabolical design. Christ was crucified under show of religion; he declared himself the SON of God,—the Jews rejected him in this character, and considered his declaration blasphemy, as they understood it to be making himself God; and, transported with the phrensy of a false zeal, they crucified the Son of God as a blasphemer. What robberies, what murders, what oppressions, what horrid massacres have not been perpetrated in the name of religion and of Christ,—in the name of that Saviour who came not to spoil men of their goods, but who made himself poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich; who came not to destroy

men's lives, but who laid down his own life that he might save them !

The devil is never so much the devil as when he most affects the angel : hypocrisy, his eldest-born, never seems the saint so much as when most she acts the devil. O Popery ! what hast thou to answer for, with thine absolutions, thine indulgences, thine inquisitions, thy tortures, and thy massacres ; and yet, bloody harlot as thou art, thou professest thyself the spouse,—the chaste, the only spouse of Christ. And thou too, Prelacy ! where shalt thou appear ? The blood of our fathers shall be found in thee ; and the plunder of our fields shall be found in thee ; and the prostitution of thyself to kings and nobles of the earth for worldly hire, shall be found in thee ; and the surrender to an earthly king of Christ's undivided crown of headship, shall be found in thee ; and the merchandize of souls shall be found in thee ; and yet thou criest out unceasingly, "The church ! The church !" as if thou indeed wert right apostolical and divine ! And ye, O ye Pharisees, how shall ye stand ! Ye who devour widows' houses, who grind the faces of the poor, and yet for a pretence make long prayers : ye "who hate your brethren, and cast them out, and say, Let the Lord be glorified : " ye who cloak your schemes of pride, and party, and lust, and avarice, and malice, and revenge, under religious pretences, and say, "Come and see my zeal for the Lord : " ye whited sepulchres, who appear outwardly righteous and religious to men, but within are full of all manner of abomination and wickedness,—in vain is it that ye attempt to cover your sins : your sins shall find you out ; ye cannot cloak them from the eye of God : ye serpents,—ye generation of vipers, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell ?

May the Spirit of God awaken in each of our hearts a sound and unfeigned repentance, so that no longer flattering ourselves in our iniquity, no longer covering our sins, we shall be taught to hate and to forsake every wicked way ! He that covereth his sins shall not prosper ; *but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

LUTHER.

February, 1835.

THE LATE DOCTOR CAREY.

DOCTOR CAREY, the well-known Baptist Missionary at Serampore, in the East Indies, died on the 9th of June last, in the seventy-third of his age. In 1793, he went to India, and forty years of his life were employed in preaching the Gospel to the heathen, and in translating the Scriptures into the various languages of India. His career was noble. He was the son of a poor man; his early education was but scanty; and he was bred to the business of a shoemaker. His genius, however, rose above all disadvantages; and it soon appeared that he was destined by Providence, not only to the highest honours in literature, but the noblest services in the Church of God. From his childhood he showed an eager thirst for knowledge; and just as he was entering manhood, it pleased God to draw his heart to Himself, which happy event guided and sanctified his literary pursuits. To understand the word of God was the first object of his desire; and he, therefore, set himself to acquire a thorough knowledge of the original languages. While engaged in these studies, he earned his daily bread by working at his trade.

Doctor Carey's conversion was brought about, under God, through the instrumentality of a fellow-apprentice, the preaching of the late Rev. T. Scott, the commentator, and the perusal of "Hall's help to Zion's travellers." As soon as he knew the grace of God himself, he was led to seek the spiritual good of others. At small private meetings in the villages of Northamptonshire he first began to expound the Scriptures. In this way, his call to the ministry was made apparent to himself and to the church.

In course of time he entered the ministry, and was settled as the pastor of a Baptist church in Leicester. By reading the narratives of voyagers and travellers, especially "Cook's voyages," the condition of the heathen was much impressed on his mind: so deeply was he affected that he resolved to become a missionary; and, in 1792, through his influence, aided by those eminent men, Fuller, Ryland, and Sutcliffe, a missionary society was formed, at whose expense he embarked, in 1793, for Bengal, with his family and another missionary.

Doctor Carey went to India in a Danish ship, without the consent of the British East India Company. To have sought it would have been useless, since the British Government in India were at that time as opposed to the propagation of Chris-

tianity in India as if they had thought their own religion false or useless. When Doctor Carey arrived in Bengal, therefore, it was a principal object with him to conceal himself from the knowledge of Government. For a short time he employed himself in the cultivation of recently redeemed jungle lands near Takee, about forty miles east from Calcutta; and here he was exposed to much suffering. A few months afterwards he was employed, together with his colleague, by a Mr. Udnes, in superintending an indigo manufactory. Through the influence of their employer they obtained, at the same time, permission from the Government to remain in India. Doctor Carey continued thus situated from 1794 to the beginning of 1800, during which time he applied himself diligently to the study of the Bengalee language, and then of the Sungskrit. He translated the Scriptures into Bengalee, preached the Gospel in it extensively, and supported several schools.

On the 10th of January, 1800, Doctor Carey went to reside at Serampore, and united with Doctor Marshman, Mr. Ward, and others, lately arrived from Europe, in forming the Serampore mission. Serampore is under the dominion of Denmark; and from the Danish Government in Serampore, and the king of Denmark himself, Doctor Carey and his colleagues uniformly received protection and favour, though they were once regarded with jealousy by their own countrymen. In the first year of his residence at Serampore, Dr. Carey's translation of the New Testament was nearly all printed; and the first Christian converts from Hindooism in Bengal were baptized. The Christian church which was then begun with a few individual believers in the Gospel, has now branched into about twenty-four churches in different parts of India.

In 1801, Doctor Carey was chosen professor of Bengalee in the newly-established college of Fort William. He was afterwards appointed professor of Sungskrit and Mahratta, and by this means he acquired an intimacy with learned pundits from all parts of India, through whom he was enabled, in the course of years, to translate the Scriptures into all the principal languages of Northern Hindostan. For the students in the college he had to compile grammars of the languages he taught them; and after many years he completed his voluminous Bengalee Dictionary. By means of these and other works, he became known throughout the world, as an Oriental scholar of the first eminence.

He was not less celebrated as a man of science. Botany and natural history he began to study long before he left Eng-

land; and India opened to him a wide field of observation, which he examined with untiring assiduity, until his strength failed him. In these pursuits he co-operated with several distinguished persons in India, and corresponded with several of the first men in Europe, with whom he was continually exchanging botanical treasures.

As a philanthropist, Doctor Carey is entitled to a high rank. He sought and gained the prevention of infanticide at Gunga Saugur. He was among the first, if not the first, that engaged in seeking the abolition of Suttees, or the burning of widows; and chiefly through his exertions the Marquis of Wellesley, our late lord lieutenant in Ireland, left to his successors in the government of India a minute declaring his conviction that Suttees might and ought to be abolished. Had he continued in the government, he would have abolished them; that desirable object has, however, since been effected. Doctor Carey took also an active part in establishing a Leper Hospital in Calcutta. He was the founder of the Agricultural Society. There was scarcely any undertaking for the benefit of the country, of which he was not either a prime mover or zealous promoter.

It was, however, as a Christian, a missionary, and a translator of the Scriptures, that Dr. Carey shone pre-eminently. Their obligations to him in these respects the people of India have in a great degree to learn; but they will yet learn them, and future generations will bless his name. Of the extent of his labours in the great work of enabling every member of the family of man to read, in his own language, the wonderful works of God, some idea may be formed, when it is stated that the Serampore press, in supplying which with various versions of the Scriptures he was the chief instrument, has issued not less than 212,000 volumes of the word of God in forty different languages, embracing the vernacular tongues of 270 millions of human beings; besides the circulation of a vast multitude of tracts, of seventy different kinds, translated by the Serampore missionaries into nine different languages; the publication of a Bengalee newspaper, which has taken a powerful and most beneficial hold of the minds of the natives; and a great many other works, interesting alike to the friends of literature and of Christian missions.

For several years past Doctor Carey's health was very infirm, and his strength sunk gradually, until the weary wheels of nature stood still, more from debility than disease. The hot weather and rainy seasons of 1833, reduced him to such

extreme weakness, that he experienced in the September of that year a stroke of apoplexy, in consequence of which his death was expected daily. It pleased God, however, to revive him for a little. So far was he recruited that in the succeeding cold season, he could take an evening and morning ride, and spend much of the day reclining in his chair, in reading or in conversation. As the hot weather again advanced, he sunk into greater debility than before; he could take no nourishment; he lay helpless and speechless upon his bed, until his skin was worn off his body, and death was a merciful relief. His dearest friends could not but rejoice that his sufferings were ended, although they mourn his loss to themselves and to mankind.

In prospect of his approaching end, his mind was in perfect peace. When last able to speak, the good man said to his beloved friends anxiously inquiring the state of his mind, "I have no raptures, but I have no fears: for the cross and atonement of Christ are my all-sufficient ground of hope and joy."

After a long suspension of intercourse with his friends in Great Britain, occasioned by adverse winds, he had the satisfaction of hearing read to him before his death, some cheering assurances of increasing attachment to the mission in which he had so long laboured, accompanied with substantial and liberal proofs of zeal for its welfare. These led him, when scarcely able to articulate, to lift up his hands in fervent gratitude to God, and to commend his beloved associates in the work, and the friends who had thus cheered his dying hours, to that God who had led and fed him all his life long. This was the last thing in which he took an interest. The last chord that vibrated in his heart was gratitude to God and his people on behalf of the mission.

His funeral sermon was preached by his friend and colleague, Doctor Marshman, from Eph. ii. 8,—“By grace are ye saved;” Doctor Carey having requested his venerable associate to perform that office, and having himself selected the particular text, thereby leaving his testimony, that by the grace of God he was what he was.

Thus died Doctor Carey, in a good old age, full of years, and labours, and honours in the cause of Christ, leaving a name great, venerable, and beloved, in the estimation of the whole Christian world;—a name equally precious to Britain and to India. He was a Baptist; but such a man is not to be viewed merely as belonging to a denomination, but as the pro-

perty of the Church of Christ at large. He was evidently raised up by the great Head of the Church to be an eminent instrument in conveying to the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ. Dull must that mind be which does not see what God hath wrought in behalf of the great work of missions, in raising up such a man, and in protracting his labours to a good old age.

We have just learned that Doctor Morrison, the celebrated Chinese missionary and translator, has also been called to his rest. LUTHER.

EPISCOPACY IN AMERICA.

To the Editors of the Christian Freeman.

THE Episcopal church of the United States of America, has no connexion with the state, except protection. She has no tithes, her entire support being drawn from the voluntary contributions of her people. In these respects she is on a level with all the other churches of the union. Being unconnected with the state, she has none of those offices which owe their existence to state connexion; acknowledging merely three orders,—bishops, priests, and deacons. She has sixteen bishops, superintending seven hundred congregations. The Episcopal church, though much smaller than the Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Independent, Secession, and others, includes among its members a considerable number of men of fortune and influence. She has a college for the education of the candidates for her ministry, at which about a hundred and fifty students are at present in attendance. These students are actively employed during their preparatory course, in useful avocations, such as those of Scripture readers and Sabbath-school teachers. In the vicinity of the college, they have assembled and they continue to sustain seventeen Sunday-schools. In some instances, a flourishing congregation has had its origin in the establishment of a Sunday-school. The government of the American Episcopal church, makes considerable approaches to the Presbyterian form. The clergyman of each parish is chosen by a number of officers appointed for managing the affairs of the parish. Parish and congregation, are, it may be observed, synonymous terms with American Episcopalians; there being of course there, where there is no state religion, none of the profanity and folly of a man's laying claim to all the people living in a certain district called a

parish, as his flock by law appointed, and professing to charge his conscience with the responsibility of attending to their spiritual interests. The general affairs of the church are managed by a convention, consisting of two divisions, similar to our House of Lords and Commons,—one consisting of the bishops, the other of representatives from the dioceses; and no law is binding on the church, which has not passed both Houses of Convocation. The American Episcopal church is no loser by being dependent for support on the *voluntary* contributions of the people. While the average salary of each of the clergy of the Episcopal church in England, is £210 annually, that of each of the American Episcopal clergy, is £300 annually, calculating the relative value of money in the two countries, for obtaining the means of subsistence. While no priest or bishop of the American Episcopal clergy has any prospect of becoming rich on his salary, every one has a competence sufficient to maintain a respectability suitable to the clerical profession, and to raise him above those anxieties and forebodings which would injure his usefulness. Bishop M'Ilvaine, a very interesting and enlightened Christian, is at present on a visit to this country; and he has been received with a cordial welcome by many in the highest circles, both clergy and laity. At the request of the archbishop of Dublin, he preached for him in Christ's Church. He is bishop of Ohio, his diocese extending over forty thousand square miles, in which there is a population of eleven hundred thousand, though it is only forty-five years since Ohio began to be peopled. In some of the older dioceses, the bishops are supported by a bishops' fund, contributed by the people, in addition to what supports the ministers of the parishes. In other cases, the bishop has charge of a congregation, and derives his support from it. Bishop M'Ilvaine resigned a congregation which paid him fourteen hundred dollars annually, for his present bishoprick, which affords him only nine hundred dollars annually; his salary being really drawn from the funds of the college of which he is president. A hint at the labours of this good bishop will serve to give some idea of what the term *bishop* means in the American sense. For the half year previously to his leaving America (and this is his usual practice), he preached on an average once every day, in different parts of a thinly peopled diocese, extending over forty thousand square miles. On such roads as those over which he has to travel, and in such vehicles as those with which he is supplied, falls and overturnings are no extraordinary occurrences. After

having travelled to that part of his diocese where he intends commencing his labours, he casts himself upon the hospitality of the people, informing them how long his stay can continue among them, and to what place he depends on them to carry him forward. As may be naturally supposed, there is a delightful emulation as to who shall be most active in good offices to the patriarchal man whom they all regard as a father; and, not content with entertaining him in their most hospitable manner, and providing for him their best mode of conveyance to the next parish, numbers of them, in the genuine style of primitive Christianity, accompany him on his journey, till he is met by another party coming to welcome him with glad hearts to the enjoyment of all that their hospitable homes and their warmest affection can give. Thus an American bishop is a Christian missionary, going forth teaching and baptizing in the name of Christ; and amidst his unwearied labours, and his unassuming simplicity, almost causing us to forget that, in his rule over his brother clergy, he is exercising a lordly authority expressly forbidden by the authority of Christ.

In a country where there are no lucrative offices connected with a profession of orthodoxy, there are of course fewer temptations to hypocrisy; and the American Episcopal church, on account of its freedom from the trammels of connexion with the State, is able to exercise a wholesome discipline. We find consequently in it a distinct line of separation between the church and the world; and no such thing is heard of as a curate being removed on account of not being able to furnish to the bishop, for confirmation, a number of young persons equal to what the population returns show that the Protestant population of the parish ought to furnish for confirmation. The mention of the word curate reminds me of the fact that there are no curates in the American Episcopal church; each parish minister there doing his own business, and no such thing as non-residence being tolerated.

Confirmation, too, is stripped of much of its profanity and mockery in American practice; for there the bishop has no notion of communicating any grace by the laying on of his hands, nor does he confirm any till after, by a strict examination, he has been enabled to form a judgment respecting their qualification for membership in the church of Christ; while to those whom he considers disqualified, he tenders most affectionate personal warnings, charging them to remember that if they come forward unworthily, their blood is upon their own heads.

The doctrinal articles of the American Episcopal church are the same as the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England, as is also her liturgy, with a few alterations; and though the bishop, in his missionary tours, introduces the liturgy whenever he preaches, whether in Methodist or Baptist meeting-house, or barn or room of an inn, such is the Christian charity prevailing among different religious bodies, that oftentimes the good bishop is sorely straitened in making a choice among the different candidates for the honour of affording him a place for preaching, and sometimes he is obliged to remain longer than he intended, lest he should seem to make invidious distinctions among those who so generously press upon him the expressions of their kindness. As may naturally be supposed, bishops, preaching so often, and to audiences so varied, are not tied down to the reading of sermons,—they preach as Christ and his apostles preached, in season and out of season—in the house and by the way, without ever thinking of chaining themselves down to the reading of discourses, or to the use only of consecrated houses and grounds.

Bishop M'Ilvaine is desirous of inducing young men connected with the Episcopal church of the United Kingdom, to emigrate to America, provided they cannot readily find a sphere of labour at home. A certificate of their being clergymen merely, he assures them will be of no service; they must have satisfactory evidence of having the work of Christ at heart. No punch-drinking preacher needs cross the Atlantic. He very properly suggests, that they should not consider themselves confined to any particular district or country, but as devoted to the service of their Master in every part of the world. The population of America is increasing without any assignable limit; all the nations of the world are pouring upon her their surplus population—a population of bold, enterprising spirits, prepared for being mighty instruments of good or ill. It is, therefore, of the highest importance that the servants of Christ should, without delay, bring such minds under the influence of the Gospel, and thus not only prevent them from becoming ready and powerful agents in the hands of Satan, but send them forth as messengers of good wherever they travel, and to all with whom they associate.

EPISCOPOS.

AMUSING ANECDOTE OF PATRONAGE.

AMONG the various collisions between clergy and people, caused by the enforcement of the antichristian law of patronage, in the Erastian Church Establishment of Scotland, we have an amusing instance of the *capture of a whole Presbytery*. A Mr. Wells had been presented to the parish of Shotts in the Presbytery of Hamilton. Such was the opposition of the people, that his settlement was defeated for several years. The General Assembly, 1764, ordered the Presbytery to proceed with his ordination. The Presbytery, after having twice heard a course of trials from him, pronounced him unqualified. The Assembly, however, directed their Commission to receive his trials; and the Commission, declaring him qualified, ordered the Presbytery to ordain Mr. Wells. The Presbytery did not obey, and were censured by the next Assembly, and commanded to go on with the ordination on a specified day. When the day arrived, in consequence of the necessary edict not having been served, there was no ordination. The Assembly of 1768, resolving to be baffled no longer, determined to have the ordination carried through during their sitting. A minister was accordingly dispatched to the kirk of Shotts to serve the edict on the Sabbath, announcing the ordination two days after. No congregation assembled, and the edict was affixed to the church-door. The Presbytery, on the day appointed, came to hold the ordination; but they could not obtain access to the church or church-yard, nor to any house or place in the neighbourhood, and the business was left undone. The Assembly, however, determined not to be defeated; and the *king's advocate*, having promised *effectual assistance*, they appointed the ordination to take place on the 2d of June, and, failing that day, on the 9th. On the first of these days, the people, maddened by priestly oppression, prevented the ordination by force. On the following day, a military force, consisting of a company of foot and a troop of dragoons, were brought to the place, to enforce the settlement at the point of the bayonet. The design, however, was still defeated. *The people kidnapped the members of Presbytery, carried them off, and detained them till the day was over!* The ordination was at last held in the Session-house of Hamilton.

In Ireland, guagers have sometimes been carried off. Had the people carried off those clergy who went out at the head of the military to levy their tithes, we might have had some

amusing stories, instead of the horrid tithe slaughters of Keady and Rathcormac.

A PRAYERLESS FAMILY.

THE late Rev. John Ryland, of Northampton, being on a journey, was overtaken by a violent storm, and compelled to take shelter in the first inn he came to. The people of the house treated him with great kindness and hospitality. They would fain have showed him into a parlour, but being very wet and cold, he begged permission rather to take a seat by the fire-side with the family. The good old man was friendly, cheerful, and well stored with entertaining anecdotes, and the family did their utmost to make him comfortable: they all supped together, and both the residents and the guest seemed mutually pleased with each other. At length, when the house was cleared, and the hour of rest approached, the stranger appeared uneasy, and looked up every time a door opened, as if expecting the appearance of something essential to his comfort. His host informed him that his chamber was prepared whenever he chose to retire. "But," said he, "you have not had your family together." "Had my family together! for what purpose? I don't know what you mean," said the landlord. "To read the Scriptures, and to pray with them," replied the guest: "surely, you do not retire to rest in the omission of so necessary a duty." The landlord confessed that he had never thought of doing such a thing. "Then, sir," said Mr. Ryland, "I must beg you to order my horse immediately." The landlord and family entreated him not to expose himself to the inclemency of the weather at that late hour of the night; observing, that the storm was as violent as when he first came in. "May be so," replied Mr. Ryland, "but I had rather brave the storm than venture to sleep in a house where there is no prayer. Who can tell what may befall us before morning?—No, sir, I dare not stay." The landlord still remonstrated, and expressing great regret that he should offend so agreeable a gentleman, at last said, he should have no objection to "call his family together," but he should not know what to do when they came. Mr. Ryland then proposed to conduct family worship, to which all readily consented. The family was immediately assembled, and then Mr. Ryland called for a Bible; but no such book could be produced. However, he was ena-

bled to supply the deficiency, as he always carried a small Bible or Testament in his pocket. He read a portion of Scripture, and then prayed with much fervour and solemnity, especially acknowledging the preserving goodness of God, that none present had been struck dead by the storm, and imploring protection through the night. He earnestly prayed that the attention of all might be awakened to the things belonging to their everlasting peace, and that the family might never again meet in the morning, or separate at night, without prayer. When he rose from his knees, almost every individual present was bathed in tears, and the inquiry was awakened in several hearts, "Sir, what must we do to be saved?" Much interesting and profitable conversation ensued. The following morning, Mr. Ryland again conducted family worship, and obtained from the landlord a promise, that, however feebly performed, it should in future be no more omitted. This day was indeed the beginning of days to that family; most, if not all, of them became decided and devoted followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and were the means of diffusing a knowledge of the Gospel in a neighbourhood which had before been proverbially dark and destitute. A word spoken in season how good is it! "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

SEVERAL of the ministers ejected by the act of uniformity, who resided in the city of Coventry, united with Mr. Baxter in establishing a lecture in a private house, on a neighbouring common. The time of worship being at a very early hour, Mr. Baxter one evening left home with a view of being there ready for the morning. The night, however, being dark, he lost his way, and after wandering for a long time, he came to a gentleman's house, where he asked direction. The servant informed his master of this fact, who, thinking it unsafe that so respectable a looking man should be wandering on the common at so late an hour, invited him in. Mr. Baxter readily accepted the proposal, and was treated with great hospitality. His conversation gave his host a high opinion of his good sense and extensive information. The gentleman wishing to know the quality of his guest, said, after supper, "As most persons have some employment or profession in life, I have no

doubt, Sir, that you have yours." Mr. Baxter replied with a smile, "Yes, sir, I am a man-catcher." "A man-catcher, are you?" said the gentleman; "I am very glad to hear you say so, for you are the very person I want. I am a justice of the peace in this district, and am commissioned to secure the person of Dick Baxter, who is expected to preach at a conventicle in this neighbourhood, early to-morrow morning; you shall go with me, and I doubt not we shall easily apprehend the rogue." Mr. Baxter very prudently consented to accompany him. Accordingly, the gentleman, the following morning, took Mr. Baxter in his carriage to the place where the meeting was to be held. When they arrived there, a considerable number of people were hovering about, for, seeing the carriage of the justice, they suspected his intentions, and were afraid to enter the house. The justice now intimated to Mr. Baxter his fears that Baxter had been apprised of his intentions, and would disappoint them, proposed extending their ride, that the people might be encouraged to assemble, and give them an opportunity of fulfilling their commission. They did so; but on their return they still found the people unwilling to assemble. The magistrate now supposing that he should be disappointed of his object, said to Mr. Baxter, that, as these people were much disaffected to the government, he would feel obliged to him if he would address them on the subject of loyalty and good behaviour. Mr. Baxter replied, that as they met for worship, it was probable that such an address would not satisfy the people; but that, if the justice would engage in prayer, he would endeavour to say something to them. The gentleman replied, he had not his prayer-book with him, or he would readily comply with the proposal; but expressed his persuasion that Mr. Baxter was able to pray with them, as well as to talk to them; and requested him to begin with prayer. They entered the house, followed by the people; Mr. Baxter prayed with great devotion and fervour; the magistrate, standing by, was soon melted into tears. The good divine then preached in his usual faithful and zealous manner; and when he had concluded, he turned to the justice and said, "Sir, I am the very Dick Baxter of whom you are in pursuit. I am entirely at your disposal." The magistrate, however, had felt so much during the service, and saw things so differently to what he had before done, that his enmity was changed to love, and ever afterwards became the friend and advocate of the persecuted, and, it is believed, also a sincere Christian.

SECESSION CHURCH IN SCOTLAND.

WE have just received the last "Report on the Institutions for religious purposes in the United Associate Congregation, Regent Place," Glasgow, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Doctor Heugh; and we feel persuaded that our readers will participate in the delight with which we hail the Christian liberality of that portion of the Presbyterian Secession Church. Doctor Heugh's congregation have set a noble example to the Christian community at large, and especially to their brethren of the Secession in this country. With a zeal and devotedness which are above all praise, they are promoting religious objects among themselves, while the missionary enterprise, both *Home* and *Foreign*, meets their warm and effective support. We are refreshed by the conduct of our Secession brethren in the sister kingdom, and we pray that the Head of the Church may enable us, though at an humble distance, to follow in their footsteps. Our readers will learn from the following extract from the Report, that, besides liberally supporting the Gospel among themselves, the Regent Place Congregation have, during the last year, raised for different religious objects upwards of *six hundred and eighty pounds sterling!*

Our *means* of supporting these Home and Foreign objects are the following.—We have, first, a separate fund for paying the salaries of two Agents of the City Mission; which subscription, including a donation of £5 from the Juvenile Society in the congregation, yields a little more than what is required, namely, £80 annually. Next we have the fund for the Foreign Mission, amounting, as has been mentioned, to about £315; of which, £2 7s. were urged on the acceptance of the Treasurer by two friends not of our communion, and £2 are a donation; leaving about £311 of annual subscription. In the third place, we have the fund of the Association for general religious purposes, which has yielded this year above £150. Lastly, we have the contributions of a Society to which we attach great importance, from the ardour of its members, from their success, but, above all, from its tendency to engage the kind hearts of so important a class in the cause of the Redeemer, and to train them for future usefulness. I allude to the Juvenile Society formed last year; and in favour of which I intreat the countenance of all Christian parents. This Society has raised nearly £39 within the year; and that sum has been allocated by their own votes. These sums, with a collection of upwards of £31 for the Synod's Missions, and other collections for religious purposes, foreign to the congregation, raise your pecuniary contributions during the year to upwards of £680.

These offerings, I trust, have been laid on the altar of God with some measure of humility, and gratitude, and faith, on the part of many. May it please God to forgive whatever has been wrong in the motives or feelings connected with them, and graciously to accept and

bless them! For myself, I deem it my duty to say, that never since my ministry began have I felt myself so much encouraged by those with whom I have the happiness to be connected. You have strengthened my feeble hands, you have comforted my often anxious heart, you have caused me to bless God and to take courage. As far as I am permitted to use the language in return, "We bless you in the name of the Lord."

It has been asked by some, will all this continue? The question, it must be admitted, is somewhat chilling. It may be said, in reply, that nothing human is certainly exempted from all adverse mutation, and that it is possible, from many causes easily to be imagined, the means of the congregation at some future time may not enable them to equal their present exertions. But will the hazard, or the certainty, of inability in future, excuse us from a duty which at this moment we can perform with ease? Among the friends of the cause of Christ, individual or collective, changes are constantly occurring; but that cause is upheld and supported, not by permitting fear of future change to check and impair present effort, *but by all doing what they now can*, leaving it to God to order their future lot as he pleases, and to provide, when they are gone, a succession of labourers, and a supply of means. And, as to *our* efforts at this time, when we know that probably no one has exerted himself beyond his power—that many have assured us they will give more if it is needed—that the exertions of all have not even yet been obtained—that the cause is not ours but God's—that he hath taught us that, not *giving to*, but *withholding from*, that cause tends to poverty, while to scatter for its sake is to increase—above all, when we consider that in these days Christians seem only beginning to feel the mighty power of evangelical motives, in the love, the cross, the salvation of the Son of God, in which they already participate, in the assured hope of that eternal life which God who cannot lie hath promised, and in the prospect of this most magnificent and glorious consummation, for the forwarding of which their instrumentality is to be honoured by God, *the conversion of the world to himself*; when these things are considered, we feel that we may reply to the question, Will our exertions be continued? by demanding in return, Shall they not rather be increased? To this demand, I trust every one whose heart these motives at all influence, will promptly reply, "If I can they shall! I blush to think I have been so long as one dead to these things. I grieve that it has been so common with professors of religion to grudge nothing for themselves, but any thing, beyond a pittance, for Christ and the souls of men. I shall no longer live to myself, but to Him who loved me and gave Himself for me; and in his ways and by his strength I shall run and not be weary, I shall walk and not faint."

H. HEUGH.

SIMPLICITY OF THE GOSPEL.

From a Translation of Tittman in the Biblical Repository.

SIMPLICITY in the interpretation of the New Testament, is necessary, because of the great simplicity in thoughts and teaching both of the sacred writers and of our Lord himself.

In regard to our Lord, who in all his human character exhibited the highest perfection, no one can be ignorant of the simplicity of the heart and mind which reigned in him, unless he himself be wholly destitute of any sense or perception of this virtue. There was in Christ not only that perfect integrity of morals and practice, by which we distinguish men of simplicity and uprightness from those who are artificial and insincere; but he exhibited also such admirable purity and truth of character, that his whole life is the most delightful image of the highest and most perfect simplicity. And this was exhibited not in any poverty of mind, nor in low views of things; but consisted in the simple and true conception of the loftiest subjects, and was chiefly conspicuous in the entire direction of his mind to heavenly things,—a virtue which constitutes the essence of true religion. It is therefore an error to suppose with some, that a man devoid of this simplicity is adapted to comprehend divine things. It is, on the other hand, no doubt true, that through the arts with which we are accustomed to embellish, or rather to corrupt human life, we bring loss and damage to the prevalence of true religion. But the more simplicity of mind and heart, so much the more prompt and prone, as it were, is a person to embrace religious truth. He, then, only can comprehend the simplicity of our Lord, so conspicuous even in the loftiest sublimity, who is endowed in some degree with the same quality. Theologians, on the contrary, in searching for sublimity in a certain artificial obscurity, have transformed the teaching and doctrines of Christ, so heavenly, simple, and appropriate, and so admirably accordant with the eternal relations of the human race, into a system which is artificial, and more correspondent to human opinions.

HOW CHRISTIANS OUGHT NOT TO TREAT ONE ANOTHER.

Mrs. Heedless. My friend, I wish to advise with you on a subject of an unpleasant nature.

Mrs. Considerate. What is it?

Mrs. H. I grieve to say that I have detected Mrs. D. in what falls little, if any thing, short of a direct falsehood.

Mrs. C. Mrs. D. of our church?

Mrs. H. Yes, Mrs. D. You would not have expected it, I presume, and there is too much reason to fear that the injury to religion will be extensive.

Mrs. C. It is much to be regretted, certainly, that such offences should ever occur; but the injury to religion may perhaps be prevented if a Christian course is pursued. I presume you have not related the story to any one.

Mrs. H. Why, yes, I have related it to Mrs. A. and Miss F. and the two Miss K's. I thought it my duty to advise with them, and two or three other Christian acquaintance, on the subject.

Mrs. C. You astonish me! The offence of this fellow-christian, it would seem, was originally known only to yourself. Why, then, have you made it public?

Mrs. H. Oh, I don't like to do things rashly, and without advice. I went to those persons, you must understand, to ascertain my duty.

Mrs. C. You have not then conversed, it would seem, with Mrs. D. on the subject?

Mrs. H. Not yet; I am not decided that I shall not do it the first convenient opportunity.

Mrs. C. Perhaps Mrs. D. might offer some satisfactory explanation.

Mrs. H. It is possible she might; and I have generally said as much on her behalf. I should be sorry indeed to injure, in the least, her Christian character without good reason. I trust I have not entirely overlooked the direction, Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you.

Mrs. C. I have always supposed that your intentions were right, and in accordance with your holy profession. But I hope you will not be offended if I ask you a serious question?

Mrs. H. Not in the least.

Mrs. C. I wish, then, to know, if you have really done to Mrs. D. in this thing as you would wish to be done by?

Mrs. H. Why,—why—

Mrs. C. Have you followed the plain direction of our Divine Saviour, in the 18th chapter of Matthew?—"Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy brother."

Mrs. H. Well, I see that I have not been altogether right in what I have done. But you will not think, I should hope, that I am chargeable with any serious offence. Pray what would you have me do to convince Mrs. D. of her sin.

Mrs. C. To speak plainly, I should think your first duty is to repent of your own sin. Mrs. D. has possibly sinned against her holy profession, in violating one of the commands

of the decalogue. And you have *certainly* sinned in violating Christ's new commandment, to love one another; and have treated his direction with guilty neglect. Now it is best first to cast out the beam out of our own eye. I do not say this to deter you from doing your duty to Mrs. D. but I beg of you, my friend, first to be faithful to yourself. For it is evident, that you have treated Mrs. D. in this instance, *as one Christian ought not to treat another.*

A PRAYER WRITTEN IN SICKNESS.

BY BISHOP HEBER.

WHEN sickness to my fainting soul,
Her fearful form display'd,
I to my secret chamber stole,
And humbly thus I pray'd :

If soften'd by th' impending stroke,
My heart, O Lord, will yield ;
In mercy thy decrees revoke,
And let my wound be heal'd.

But if from Memory's tablet soon
Ingratitude would tear
The bounteous giver and the boon,
Oh ! hear not thou my prayer.

Rather than bear that blackest stain
Within my breast, I'd brave
The keenest throb of restless pain,
The terrors of the grave.

If health's unmerited return
Should bless my future days,
Oh ! may I from thy Spirit learn
A daily song of praise.

But should I shortly hence depart,
Or, lingering, suffer still ;
May that blest Spirit, Lord, impart
Submission to thy will.

Wilson, Printer, 70, High-street.